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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WORLD'S LARGEST MATH EVENT

CHARLESTON -- Mathematics teachers attending the 38th Annual Conference on the Teaching of Mathematics at Eastern Illinois University will help celebrate the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' (NCTM) 75th anniversary by participating in the first "World's Largest Math Event."

On Tuesday, April 25 teachers and students from around the globe will participate in a variety of math activities to carry out the theme "Hug the World."

At EIU on Tuesday afternoon, approximately 500 participants in the regional conference will gather at the Library Quad to create four different human graphs and figures on a gigantic spreadsheet. The following figures will be depicted:

- * at 1:40 p.m., the NCTM 75th anniversary logo;
- * at 1:47 p.m., a birthday card for EIU's Centennial;
- * at 1:54 p.m., a human bar graph of the participants' ages; and
- * at 2:02 p.m., a "Hug the World" activity featuring EIU's

-more-

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Math Energy Club, composed of 150 future math teachers, who will circle the participants in a "symbolic hug."

"This is a totally new event and all of us involved with the conference are really excited about it. We hope that the teachers who participate will take these activities back to their students and be prepared to try something like it next year," said Max Gerling, EIU professor of mathematics and math event coordinator. "The event is really one way to show students that they can have fun while problem solving."

The participants will receive instructions prior to meeting on the quad. Each will be assigned coordinates for the separate activities. Heath candy company donated candy wrapper material which will be stretched out on the quad to mark the spreadsheet. Each spreadsheet cell will be a three foot by three foot square.

"Rather than just looking at a cell on a spreadsheet, the participants will actually be standing in a cell on a spreadsheet. It should be more meaningful for them and for their students," said Gerling.

The event also corresponds with Mathematics Awareness Week, April 23-29 which is sponsored each year by the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics (JPBM).